

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 2, 4, 6, are presently pending in this application. Claims 9, 11 and 13 through 15 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, as follows:

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously Presented) A packet switching apparatus, comprising:
 - n (an integer of 3 or more) slots capable of housing line interface cards to each of which an input line and an output line are connected; and
 - a packet switch for switching packets outputted from k line interface cards housed in k (an integer equal to or greater than 2 and less than or equal to n) slots of the n slots, wherein:
 - each of the k line interface cards adds a bitmap to a multicast packet inputted from the input line and outputs the multicast packet to the packet switch;
 - the packet switch multicasts the multicast packets to plural line interface cards of the k line interface cards specified in the bitmap; and
 - the length of the bitmap is made variable depending on the value of k, and wherein each of the k line interface cards brings the length of the bitmap to n bits when $k = n$, and makes the length of the bitmap smaller than n bits when $k < n$.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Original) A packet switching apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:
 - a control part for controlling the k line interface cards and the packet switch; and
 - a management terminal connected to the control part,wherein the value of k is inputted from the management terminal.
5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) A packet switching apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:
means for detecting that the line interface cards are housed in the slots.

7-15. (Cancelled)